

Croatia: Brač, Korčula & Mljet National Park

Tour-Only Itinerary

While some island-hopping vacations merely scratch Croatia's surface, this walking adventure brings you deep into its authentic culture. Our local Croatian leaders are the key ingredient—with deep roots in the Dalmatian Islands, they'll introduce you to many local friends along the way. On the island of Brač, you'll enjoy lunch under a friend's garden pergola. Stroll through mossy woodlands on the island of Korčula, followed by an entertaining evening of local music and revelry. Enjoy stunning views of the Pelješac channel while relaxing on the terrace of a local Lumbarda vintner—sampling sensational Grk wine. Take a catamaran ferry ride to Mljet National Park and discover rich bird and plant life along the tranquil shores of the Adriatic. With a final night in historic Dubrovnik, you can truly say you've experienced the authentic Dalmatian Coast.



Highlights

- Spend a leisurely three nights on the spectacular island of Korčula, with time to enjoy a festive dinner at our friends' *konoba* in the breathtaking hills above town.
- Trek across lush terrain (perhaps taking a dip in crystalline waters) as you explore the National Park on the island of Mljet.
- Discover the birthplace of the legendary Marco Polo as you walk the charming, medieval streets of Korčula's Old Town, lead by a local expert.
- Sip homemade walnut liqueur under the pergola after a tasty lunch of *pašticada* at our friend Mate's house on Brač.

- Sample Croatia's indigenous grk grape variety at an organic winery on Korčula.

On all Fully-Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Air Packages include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures. It is rated easy to moderate, with most walks on the moderate side, an average of 4 to 6 miles per day, with options on some days. There are daily ascents and

descents, with climbing time on the ascents ranging from about 15 to 45 minutes (and average elevation gain and loss of approximately 500 feet). The terrain varies from paved and cobblestone streets (during organized city tours and other easy village exploration) to uneven, single-track trails with loose stones or gravel, rocky coastal paths, ancient ruins, and sets of ancient stone steps. The trails are often exposed to the sun. Days are quite full on this tour due to the inclusion of travel by ferry and catamaran in order to island hop.

DAY 1

Join your *Croatia: Brač, Korčula & Mljet National Park* tour. Walk to Split port for ferry to Brač. Dračevica to Donji Humac. Travel to Postira

3 miles, easy

Your leaders will meet you in the lobby at the Hotel Park at 9:00 a.m. They'll be wearing Country Walkers shirts. Please be dressed for city walking.

After a brief orientation meeting, join your leaders for a short walk along the seaside promenade to the nearby ferry terminal. Reaching the port, you board the (50-minute) public ferry to Brač—the longest island in the archipelago and also the one with the highest elevation. You disembark in Supetar, a vibrant little town on the island's north side dominated by a church.

Brač, the third-largest island in the Croatian archipelago, is best known for its luminous white stone, from which both Diocletian's Palace in Split and elements of the White House in Washington, DC, were constructed. It's also famous for its olives, and the most important variety on the island is Oblitsa, also known as Bračka. A short minibus drive leads to the start of an easygoing walk from the tiny village of Dračevica past vineyards, almond trees, olive groves and stone quarries, and culminating at the nearby village of Donji Humac, home to a very special gallery, a combination of sculpture, painting and fashion design. After a brief tour (and maybe even a demonstration of the traditional methods used by the artists), refuel over a lunch of local specialties at a favorite restaurant before continuing along (via a 15-minute minibus journey) to your hotel, a comfortable property with a pool overlooking the sleepy village of Postira. After getting settled, explore this former merchant town of stone buildings and palaces with your leaders, then gather for a welcome drink and dinner, where you can savor another delicious meal featuring the

bounty of this distinctive coast.

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2

Postira to Splitska and Škrip, and Lovrečina cove to Postira

5 miles, easy to moderate, 800-ft. elevation gain; 3 miles, easy

Savor breakfast and coffee, perhaps on the outdoor terrace, admiring the calm waters of the sheltered cove. Today's walk takes you along a pine-clad northern coastal path from Postira to the fishing village of Splitska. A steady ascent winds through olive groves and cultivated terraces, culminating at the village of Škrip, the island's first settlement, founded by the Illyrians in 1000 BCE. Remains of the original city wall can still be seen around the citadel. Pause to visit a local olive oil museum for a glimpse into the history of oil production and for a sample of the "liquid gold." For lunch, savor a feast with our friend Mate under the pergola at his home: hearty *paštica*, a traditional Dalmatian specialty of slowly braised beef served with homemade gnocchi, local cheeses and *prsut* (Croatian prosciutto), and a digestif of homemade walnut liqueur.

The afternoon presents two options. Join your leaders along the *lungomare*, or seaside trail, from Lovrečina cove back to Postira, passing ruins of a Roman basilica en route to your hotel. Or, you may opt to return to the hotel via minibus. Either option allows you time to relax poolside this afternoon. Later, enjoy dinner on your own at the hotel or one of the many waterfront eateries.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3

Island hopping: Travel to Hvar Island and Korčula Island

1-2 miles, easy to moderate

After a breakfast of fresh fruit, bread, cheese, and yogurt, you set off for a day of island hopping. Board a catamaran ferry for a short trip to the chic island of Hvar, once famed for its lavender production. A walled, medieval port with stunning beaches, Hvar town is a delight to explore. The surrounding waters are home

to picturesque islands, while the city's Old Town features elegant Renaissance architecture. Enjoy a tour of the town with an expert local guide. Visit the Cathedral of St. Stephen, with its rectangular bell tower, and the town's impressive 17th-century theater (the first in Europe to be open to the public). Afterward, consider popping into the Benedictine convent where, over the centuries, the nuns perfected the art of lacemaking—a small on-site museum showcases their handiwork. Join your guide on the short (steep) climb to the Španjola Fortress, a medieval castle occupying the site of an ancient Illyrian settlement dating to 500 BCE. The trail to the citadel rewards you with a bird's-eye view of the picturesque harbor and the nearby Pakleni islands. Savor lunch on your own at a *konoba* (tavern) of your choice. The day is yours to stroll the promenade, take a dip in the sea, peruse the shops and galleries, or just relax at a waterfront café.

Spend the late afternoon relaxing on a scenic public ferry (catamaran) to Korčula Island, the sixth-largest Adriatic island. Settle in at your seaside hotel and base for the next three nights before stepping out with your leaders for a memorable dinner, savoring starters like tuna pâté, followed by fresh grilled fish, paired with a glass of local crisp white wine.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4

Brdo, Žrnovo, and Kocje Protected Area

4 miles, easy to moderate

After breakfast in your hotel's panoramic dining room, you set out to explore the wooded hills above the Old Town of Korčula, an island blanketed in vineyards, olive groves, and Mediterranean maquis (a low lying fragrant shrub), and sprinkled with picturesque villages. Cherished cultural traditions have been lovingly preserved on this island, from religious festivals and folk music to dancing and shipbuilding. A short drive brings you to Brdo, where you follow an enchanting trail circuit in the Kocje Protected Area—an area characterized by vineyards, rock walls, distant church towers, and large boulders draped in emerald green moss and ivy.

Your trail continues along rocky terrain. Later, arrive via the old Napoleon Road in Žrnovo, where there'll be time to explore the village and St. Martin's Church. Continue to a nearby home/winery, where you are rewarded with a tasting of the famous Grk and Plavac Mali wines and a light, tapas-style lunch served on

a terrace that boasts magnificent sweeping views of the sea and surrounding islands.

Late afternoon affords free time. Known for its vineyards and olive groves, Korčula is also home to ancient Croatian traditions and an atmospheric medieval Old Town, preserved as a UNESCO World Heritage site. One of the most picturesque of the Adriatic islands, it's surprisingly uncrowded, offering delightful opportunities for exploration. Take to the water and admire the stunning view looking back at Korčula from the sea. You can rent a kayak or SUP (stand-up paddleboard) for a self-guided tour of the nearby waters. Or enjoy a plunge in the hotel's outdoor pool. You may wish to browse the fascinating collections of Korčula town's small museums, including the Town Museum and the Icon Museum, or explore the narrow alleys dotted with charming boutiques and art galleries.

Later, reconvene as a group for a walk with a passionate local guide through the Old Town—often called a miniature Dubrovnik for its beautiful medieval buildings and stonework. Afterward, enjoy an evening of independent dining, (with recommendations from your leaders) and a post-dinner stroll along the enchanting streets of Korčula town, providing perfect closure to this rewarding day.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 5

Mljet National Park

3-7 miles, easy to moderate

After breakfast, embark on a catamaran-style ferry for a 45-minute ride to the lush, forest-covered island of Mljet, home to a national park of the same name. In 1960, this alluring island became Croatia's first protected marine area, a paradise of unspoiled tranquility that is said to have kept Odysseus in its embraces for seven years.

Your leaders offer different trail options today, allowing you to customize your time in this stunning natural setting. You might trace the shores of Veliko Jezero and Malo Jezero (literally Great and Small Lake), perhaps climbing 500 feet to Veliki Gradac for a bird's eye view over the Soline Channel.

Take time to enjoy a swim and refuel over lunch at a lakeside *konoba*. Hop a boat to St. Mary's Island in the center of Veliko Jezero, the larger lake, where you can explore the 900-year-old Benedictine

monastery of Sveta Marija (St. Mary).

Return to Korčula late afternoon. Dinner this evening is a special affair at a friend's restaurant in the hills above Korčula. A traditional feast awaits, featuring a seasonal menu that may include local cheese, olives and cured meat, homemade pasta, greens from the garden and grilled fish, paired with a glass (or two!) of local wine or beer.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6

Peljesac Peninsula: Viganj to Orebic. Travel to Dubrovnik

5 miles, easy to moderate, 800-ft. elevation gain and loss

After an included breakfast, you bid farewell to Korčula to walk the hills along the Peljesac Peninsula. This area is home to some of the best beaches in southern Dalmatia, with wide, sandy coves bordered by groves of tamarisk and pine.

After a short private boat ride to the tiny town of Viganj, you ascend a rocky trail for approximately 20 minutes. You are quickly graced with gorgeous views across the channel to Korčula before descending to Orebić. Once an important maritime center, the town is now home to a small maritime museum. Enjoy lunch and a stroll through town on your own. Afterward, you proceed to magnificent Dubrovnik, with a brief stop in Ston, notable both for its salt pans (the oldest in Europe), and its impressive 14th-century walls, which originally included 40 towers and five forts, and stretched for five miles. Continue by minibus another hour where you settle into your luxury seaside hotel by late afternoon. After time to refresh and perhaps swim at the private beach or pool, reconvene for a celebratory dinner with your leaders and travel companions to toast the week's adventures.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 7

Your Croatia: Brač, Korčula & Mljet National Park tour concludes

After an included breakfast (and by the hotel's check out time of 12:00 p.m.), you bid farewell to your

leaders and travel companions. Continue your independent adventure or make connections for your next destination. The hotel can assist with any transportation required to Dubrovnik Airport or beyond.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

	Tour Only	Air Package
Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓	✓
14 on-tour meals: 6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 dinners	✓	✓
Local leaders with you throughout land tour	✓	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓	✓
Telescopic walking sticks provided on tour	✓	✓
Roundtrip airfare		✓
One extra night in Split and one extra night in Dubrovnik		✓
Airport car service for arrival & departure		✓
Business-class upgrades available		✓